



EMIL FREI & ASSOCIATES, INC. • ARTISTS & CRAFTSMEN
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APPRAISAL FOR EMIL FREI STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

AT ST. STANISLAUS SEMINARY CHAPEL

FLORISSANT, MO

2-15-2025

1. Munich Pictorial Style

The windows at the St. Stanislaus Chapel are characterized by a style of painting known as "Munich Pictorial" which our studio did extensively from 1898 to 1940. In the history of stained glass, this level of painting is, without question, the height of man's talent. The facial expressions, the delicacy of the robes and garments, the usage of deep and rich colors, and the background of the architectural canopy are all hallmarks of this style. In content, "Munich Pictorial" favored biblical scenes, portraits or significant scenes from a saint's life, and Marian devotion (which was at a high point at this time).

As the name suggests, "Munich Pictorial" originated in Bavaria in the mid 1800's under the patronage of Ludwig I. My great-great grandfather, Emil Frei Sr., studied at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts before bringing this style with him to the United States in the late 1800's, amid the surge of German immigrants. The painting was so detailed that some artists would spend their entire career painting nothing but faces or limbs. The beauty of this detail came at a cost, however. With the amount of hours needed to achieve such life-like effects, the price of these windows would grow out of the reach of most church's dwindling budgets, especially as the minimum wage began its steady hike upwards. Compounded with a shift in the broader aesthetical landscape, the era of "Munich Pictorial" windows was effectively over in the 1950's.

2. Materials and Process

Prior to 1940, materials and equipment in stained glass were quite expensive, while labor was comparatively quite cheap. What resulted: extraordinary amounts of time were available to create incredibly intricate works of art. The earlier the work, the more exaggerated the time vs. material cost comparison.

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In regards to the base glass, we used primarily mouth blown, full antique leaded crystal, blown primarily in Germany with lesser amounts from France. It is exactly the same way glass was blown in the Fifteenth Century and is still the nicest glass made in the world today.

The majority of the painting in your windows were done in blacks which consists of iron oxide suspended in Acacia gum and water or oil, depending on the textures we want. When we paint, we do not paint with paint at all, but with metal oxides. These metal oxides are then fired into the glass at 1,150 degrees Fahrenheit (which is the melting point of glass) so that the oxides become fused with absolute permanence, never to fade or peel with time. Other colors can be fired in as well, such as silver nitrates for yellows (which was used extensively on your windows), zinc oxides for whites, etc. Also, we will occasionally use enamels, although they can add a slight opacity which we do not find highly desirable.

In regards to longevity, the glazing processes of leading, sealing, and strengthening the stained glass have changed very little in the last 500 years. Lead is used both for its remarkable resistance to corrosion, and for the fact that it is soft. It forms a soft perimeter cushion protecting the edges of each piece from adjacent pieces. This stops any possibility of chips or flakes starting runs or cracks. We do not know how long your stained glass windows can be expected to last (as windows elsewhere in the world are now reaching 950 years old--and ours over 100), but barring unusual circumstances, your windows could last a millennium, influencing the children of children, whose grandparents aren't even born yet. It is one of the fabulous quirks that make working in such an old family business so refreshing and rewarding.

3. Status and Condition

In regards to their condition, these windows are very well fabricated originally and appeared, in 2018, to be in good shape (with several minor exceptions, which is to be expected given their age and exposure history while in their original location). The condition of the windows have more rapidly deteriorated since the building has been uninhabited. The Munich style windows are no longer being made at the rate they once were. Time and, therefore, budgets simply do not allow for the painstaking care necessary in honing the painting skills that are developed over most of a lifetime. In fact there are only a few Studios existing in the world today that can even recreate some of the extraordinarily complicated individual lites. Therefore, these windows are only becoming rarer today. To what value this lack of current and future availability should contribute is difficult to establish.

4. Value of Windows (Replacement Value)

In evaluating stained glass, there are a number of factors, some mechanical, some intrinsic, which have to be considered. On windows which we produced in our era, the preferred valuation is replacement value as it most closely represents actual values. However, replacement value does not address the abilities and nuances of the individual artists and craftsmen that originally produced the glass which, in this case, increases values considerably.

For purposes of this Appraisal, we are using the estimated time in man hours it would take today to produce a comparable series, realizing of course, that the skills of our forefathers exceed any available today (without extensive training and repetitive production). Indeed, when we made these windows, certain artists spent their entire lives painting nothing but faces, others the scenic backgrounds, others clothing, and still others the stone traceries, etc.

There are even other factors that can influence appraisals of which I can go into, but these get more into the purview of requests by museums. At any rate, with all of the above being said, the following is a realistic fiscal evaluation of the stained glass windows originally created by our Studio in the dollar amounts of February 2025.

Window	Square feet per window	Cost per Square Foot	Cost Per Window	# of Windows	Total Cost
Nave Clerestory	76.05	\$2,000	\$152,095	12	\$1,825,145
Choir Loft Rose	66	\$1,600	\$105,592	1	\$105,592
Totals				13	\$1,930,737

5. Closing

The above investigations, measurements, calculations and final figures are true to the best of our abilities given the information and dimensions available. Should anyone associated wish to discuss the methods of our calculations further, we would be most willing to elucidate at length.

Sincerely,

EMIL FREI & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Aaron Frei

President